

THE LAST SHOT

COPYRIGHT, 1914, by CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

by FREDERICK PALMER



SYNOPSIS

Chapter I—At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays Marta Galland and her mother, entertaining Colonel Westerling of the Grays, see Captain Lanstron, staff intelligence officer of the Browns, injured by a fall in his aeroplane.

CHAPTER II.

Ten Years Later.

His Excellency the chief of staff of the Grays was seldom in his office. His Excellency had years, rank, prestige. The breast of his uniform sagged with the weight of his decorations. He appeared for the army at great functions; his picture was in the shop-windows. Hedworth Westerling, the new vice-chief of staff, was content with this arrangement. His years would not permit him the supreme honor. This was for a figurehead, while he had the power.

His appointment to the staff ten years ago had given him the field he wanted, the capital itself, for the play of his abilities. His vital energy, his impressive personality, his gift for courting the influences that counted, whether man's or woman's, his astute readiness in stooping to some measure that were in keeping with the times but not with army precedent, had won for him the goal of his ambition. He had passed over the heads of older men, whom many thought his betters, rather ruthlessly. Those who would serve loyally he drew around him; those who were bitter he crowded out of his way.

In the adjoining room, occupied by Westerling, the walls were hung with the silhouettes of infantrymen, such as you see at maneuvers, in different positions of firing, crouching in shallow trenches, standing in deep trenches, or lying flat on the stomach on level earth. Another silhouette, that of an infantryman running, was peppered with white points in arms and legs and parts of the body that were not vital, to show in how many places a man may be hit with a small-caliber bullet and still survive.

In this day of universal European conception, if Westerling were to win in war it would be with five millions—five hundred thousand more than when he faced a young Brown officer over the wreck of an aeroplane—including the reserves; each man running, firing, crouching, as was the figure on the wall, and trying to give more of the white points that peppered the silhouette than he received.

Now Turcas, the assistant vice-chief of staff, and Bouchard, chief of the division of intelligence, standing on either side of Westerling's desk, awaited his decisions on certain matters which they had brought to his attention. Both were older than Westerling, Turcas by ten and Bouchard by fifteen years.

Turcas had been strongly urged in inner army circles for the place that Westerling had won, but his manner and his ability to court influence were against him. A lath of a man and stiff as a lath, pale, with thin, tightly-drawn lips, quiet, steel-gray eyes, a tracery of blue veins showing on his full temples, he suggested the ascetic no less than the soldier, while his incisive brevity of speech, flavored now and then with pungent humor, without any inflection in his dry voice, was in keeping with his appearance. He arrived with the clerks in the morning and frequently remained after they were gone. As a master of detail Westerling regarded him as an invaluable assistant, with certain limitations, which were those of the pigeonhole and the treadmill.

As for Bouchard, nature had meant him to be a wheel-horse. He had never had any hope of being chief of staff.

Hawk-eyed, with a great beak nose and iron-gray hair, intensely and solemnly serious, lacking a sense of humor, he would have looked at home with his big, bony hands gripping a broadsword hilt and his lank body clothed in chain armor. He had a mastiff's devotion to its master for his chief.

"Since Lanstron became chief of intelligence of the Browns information seems to have stopped," said Westerling, but not complainingly. He appreciated Bouchard's loyalty.

"Yes, they say he even burns his laundry bills, he is so careful," Bouchard replied.

"But that we ought to know," Westerling proceeded, referring very insistently to a secret of the Browns which had baffled Bouchard. "Try a woman," he went on with that terse, hard directness which reflected one of his sides. "There is nobody like a woman for that sort of thing. Spend enough to get the right woman."

Turcas and Bouchard exchanged a glance, which rose suggestively from the top of the head of the seated vice-chief of staff. Turcas smiled slightly, while Bouchard was graven as usual.

"You could hardly reach Lanstron though you spent a queen's ransom," said Bouchard in his literal fashion.

"I should say not!" Westerling ex-

claimed. "No doubt about Lanstron's being all there! I saw him ten years ago after his first aeroplane flight under conditions that proved it. However, he must have susceptible subordinates."

"We'll set all the machinery we have to work to find one, sir," Bouchard replied.

"Another thing, we must dismiss any idea that they are concealing either artillery or dirigibles or planes that we do not know of," continued Westerling. "That is a figment of our apprehensions. The fact that we find no truth in the rumors proves that there is none. Such things are too important to be concealed by one army from another."

"Lanstron certainly cannot carry them in his pockets," remarked Turcas. "Still, we must be sure," he added thoughtfully, more to himself than to Westerling, who had already turned his attention to a document which Turcas laid on the desk.

"The 128th Regiment has been ordered to South La Tir, but no order yet given for the 132d, whose place it takes," he explained.

"Let it remain for the present!" Westerling replied.

After they had withdrawn, the look that passed between Turcas and Bouchard was a pointed question. The 132d to remain at South La Tir! Was there something more than "newspaper talk" in this latest diplomatic crisis between the Grays and the Browns? Westerling alone was in the confidence of the premier of late. Any exchange of ideas between the two subordinates would be fruitless surmise and against the very instinct of staff secrecy, where every man knew only his work and asked about no one else's.

Westerling ran through the papers that Turcas had prepared for him. If Turcas had written them, Westerling knew that they were properly done. Having cleared his desk into the hands of his executive clerk, he looked at the



"One-Seventh the Allotted Span of Life!" He mused.

clock. It had barely turned four. He picked up the final staff report of observations on the late Balkan campaign, just printed in book form, glanced at it and laid it aside. Already he knew the few lessons afforded by this war "done on the cheap," with limited equipment and over bad roads. No dirigibles had been used and few planes. It was no criterion, except in the effect of the fire of the new pattern guns, for the conflict of vast masses of highly trained men against vast masses of highly trained men, with rapid transportation over good roads, complete equipment, thorough organization, backed by generous resources, in the cataclysm of two great European powers.

Rather idly, now, he drew a pad toward him and, taking up a pencil, made the figures seventeen and twenty-seven. Then he made the figures thirty-two and forty-two. He blackened them with repeated tracings as

he mused. This done, he put seventeen under twenty-seven and thirty-two under forty-two. He made the subtraction and studied the two tens.

A saving door opened softly and his executive clerk reappeared with a soft tread.

"Some papers for your signature, sir," he said as he slipped them on the blotter in front of Westerling. "And the 132d—no order about that, sir?" he asked.

"None. It remains!" Westerling replied.

The clerk went out impressed. His chief taking to some of subtraction and totally preoccupied. The 132d to

remain! He, too, had a question-mark in his secret mind.

Westerling proceeded with his mathematics. Having heavily shaded the tens, he essayed a sum in division. He found that ten went into seventy just seven times.

"One-seventh the allotted span of life!" he mused. "Take off fifteen years for youth and fifteen after fifty-five—nobody counts after that, though I mean to—and you have ten into forty, which is one-fourth. That is a good deal. But it's more to a woman than to a man—yes, a lot more to a woman than to a man!"

The clerk was right in thinking Westerling preoccupied; but it was not with the international crisis. Over his coffee the name of Miss Marta Galland, in the list of arrivals at a hotel, had caught his eye in the morning paper. A note to her had brought an answer, saying that her time was limited, but she would be glad to have him call at five that afternoon.

Westerling realized that the question of marriage as a social requirement might arise when he should become officially chief of staff with the retirement of His Excellency the field-marshal. For the present he enjoyed his position as a bachelor who was the most favored man in the army too much to think of marriage.

It was a little surprising that the bell that the girl of seventeen had rung in his secret mind when he was on one of the first rounds of the ladder, now lost in the mists of a lower stratum of existence, should ever tinkle again. Yet he had heard its note in the tone of her prophecy with each step in his promotion; and while the other people whom he had known at La Tir were the vaguest shadows of personalities, her picture was as definite in detail as when she said: "You have the will! You have the ambition!" She had recognized in him the power that he felt; foreseen his ascent to the very apex of the pyramid. She was still unmarried, which was strange; for she had not been bad-looking and she was of a fine old family. What was she like now? Commonplace and provincial, most likely. Many of the people he had known in his early days appeared so when he met them again. But, at the worst, he looked for an interesting half-hour.

The throbbing activity of the streets of the capital, as his car proceeded on the way to her hotel, formed an energetic accompaniment to his gratifying backward survey of how all his plans had worked out from the very day of the prophecy. Had he heard the remark of a great manufacturer to the banker at his side in a passing limousine, "There goes the greatest captain of industry of us all!" Westerling would only have thought: "Certainly. I am chief of staff. I am at the head of all your workmen at one time or another!" Had he heard the banker's answer, "But pretty poor pay, pretty small dividends!" he would have thought, "Splendid dividends—the dividends of power!"

He had a caste contempt for the mediocrity of commerce, with their mercenary talk about credit and market prices; and also for the ecientists, doctors, engineers, and men of other professions, who spoke of things in books which he did not understand. Reading books was one of the faults of Turcas, his assistant. No bookish soldier, he knew, had ever been a great general. He resented the growing power of these leaders of the civil world, taking distinction away from the military, even when, as a man of parts, he had to court their influence. His was the profession that was and ever should be the elect. A penniless subaltern was a gentleman, while he could never think of a man in business as one.

All the faces in the street belonged to a strange, busy world outside his interest and thoughts. They formed what was known as the public, often making a clatter about things which they did not understand, when they should obey the orders of their superiors. Of late, their clatter had been about the extra taxes for the recent increase of the standing forces by another corps. The public was bovine with a parrot's head. Yet it did not admire the tolling ox, but the eagle and the lion.

As his car came to the park his eyes lighted at sight of one of the dividends—one feature of urban life that ever gave him a thrill. A battalion of the 128th, which he had ordered that afternoon to the very garrison at South La Tir that he had once commanded, was marching through the main avenue. Youths all, of twenty-one or two, they were in a muddy-grayish uniform which was the color of the plain as seen from the veranda of the Galland house. Where these came from were other boys growing up to take their places. The mothers of the nation were doing their duty. All the land was a breeding-ground for the dividends of Hedworth Westerling.

At the far side of the park he saw another kind of dividend—another group of marching men. These were not in uniform. They were the unemployed. Many were middle-aged, with worn, tired faces. Beside the flag of

the country at the head of the procession was that of universal radicalism. And his car had to stop to let them pass. For an instant the indignation of military autocracy rose strong within him at sight of the national colors in such company. But he noted how naturally the men kept step; the solidarity of their movement. The stamp of their army service in youth could not be easily removed. He realized the advantage of heading an army in which defense was not dependent on a mixture of regular and volunteers, but on universal conscription that brought every able-bodied man under discipline.

These reservists, in the event of war, would hear the call of race and they would fight for the one flag that then had any significance. Yes, the old human impulses would predominate and the only enemy would be on the other side of the frontier. They would be pawns of his will—the will that Marta Galland had said would make him chief of staff.

Wasn't war the real cure for the general unrest? Wasn't the nation growing stale from the long peace? He was ready for war now that he had become vice-chief, when the retirement of His Excellency, unable to bear the weight of his years and decorations in the field, would make him the supreme commander. One ambition gained, he heard the appeal of another; to live to see the guns and rifles that had fired only blank cartridges in practice pouring out shells and bullets, and all the battalions that had played at sham war in maneuvers engaged in real war, under his direction. He saw his columns sweeping up the slopes of the Brown range. Victory was certain. He would be the first to lead a great modern army against a great modern army; his place as the master of modern tactics secure in the minds of all the soldiers of the world. The public would forget its unrest in the thrill of battles won and provinces conquered, and its clatter would be that of acclaim for a new idol of its old faith.

(To be continued)

LOST—Pair of eye-glasses in case Sunday afternoon near B. O. track south of town on Ryan Road. Return to F. W. McDowell and receive reward.

Candidate for
Common Pleas Judge
GEO. W. SMITH
Republican

Satisfaction

IS A BIG PART OF THIS EARTHLY EXISTENCE.

WE'LL HELP YOU SO FAR AS NICE-FITTING, WELL-APPEARING LAUNDRY GOES—AND THAT IS A LOT, TOO. JUST LOOK US UP IN THE DIRECTORY. WE'LL DO THE REST.

The
Medina Laundry
PHONE 2R99 OR 1099

DR. R. J. BAIRD, Practice limited to diseases of EYE, EAR, NOSE AND THROAT AND FITTING OF GLASSES. Office over O. N. Leach & Son's clothing store. Office day every Saturday.

Carbon Removed

From your Auto Cylinders while you wait. Your money back if you are not satisfied.

WESTERN RESERVE GARAGE

Phone 1300 Medina, O

McDOWELL'S Studio

Ground Floor, North Court Street. BEST PHOTOGRAPHY, PORTRAITS, ENLARGING, VISIONING, KODAK FINISHING. Open Sundays by appointment.

AUTOMOBILES
We are in position to offer you exceptional values in used cars, many of which are modern. New arrivals every day. Watch our stock. If you prefer any special make, let us find it for you.
THE AKRON AUTO GARAGE COMPANY
22 E. Bushtel. 230 S. Main
AKRON, OHIO 4612

H. A. WAITE

Funeral Director

and

Embalmer

North Side Public Square Office Phone 4080

THE Second Arrival Of Ohio Coal

A car of Massillon Lump.

The price will be the same as last year, \$4.50 per ton.

Medina Coal Co.

Phone 1171

HOW'S THIS?

We offer One Hundred Dollars Reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.

F. J. CHENEY & Co., Toledo, O. We, the undersigned, have known F. J. Cheney for the last 15 years and believe him perfectly honorable in all business transactions and financially able to carry out any obligations made by his firm.

NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE TOLEDO, O.

John D. Owen
of Wadsworth
for
Common Pleas
Judge

Woman Stomach Sufferer Now Can Eat As She Pleases

Mrs. Perkins Finds Swift Relief After First Dose of Mayr's Remedy.

Mrs. W. E. Perkins of Point Place, R. R. No. 7, Toledo, suffered for a long time from stomach troubles. She felt bad most of the time and could hardly ever find anything to eat that would agree with her.

She took Mayr's Wonderful Stomach Remedy and was surprised at the sudden restoration that followed. She wrote:

"I have been taking your remedy and it has done me so much good and I am so much better that I am eating most anything and everything that I used to eat years ago, before I knew what stomach trouble was. I am thankful that I heard of your wonderful medicine."

Similar letters have been written by thousands of people in all parts of the United States. Mayr's Wonderful

Stomach Remedy is known everywhere. The first dose proves—no long treatment.

Mayr's Wonderful Stomach Remedy clears the digestive tract of mucoid accretions and removes poisonous matter. It brings quick relief to sufferers from stomach, bowels and liver trouble. Many declare it has saved them from dangerous operations and many are sure it has saved their lives.

Because of the wonderful success of this remedy, there are many imitations, so be cautious. Be sure it's MAYR'S. Go to all or any drug store and ask about the remarkable results it has been accomplishing in cases they know about—or send to George H. Mayr, Mfg. Chemist, 154-156 Whiting street, Chicago, Ill., for free book on stomach troubles and ailments and many grateful letters from people who have been restored. Any druggist can tell you its wonderful results.

Perfect Frocks for Hot Weather

Made At Home In A Day are described and charmingly illustrated in the new

McCALL PATTERNS
AND
FASHION PUBLICATIONS

Now On Sale

WATCH OUR SPECIAL
PIECE GOODS SALES

and make your own clothes at home. There was a time when home dress making was so easy and satisfactory.



© McCALL

The up-to-date woman's wardrobe is incomplete without the long tunic in some development. The model illustrated here is among the hundreds of new styles shown at our pattern department.

Ask For Free Fashion Sheet

E. J. DE ARMITT.

Medina Ohio